



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Personnel Cabinet Communications Office

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**Personnel Cabinet Honored with Two Awards:
KY. Employee Mediation Program & Health Insurance Enrollment**

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Personnel Cabinet Secretary Erwin Roberts announced today the cabinet is the proud recipient of two awards for programs designed to improve employee services in mediation and health insurance enrollment. Together, the programs saved the Commonwealth more than \$372,000 last year.

The National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE) awarded the Personnel Cabinet the 2006 Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award for its Kentucky Employee Mediation Program (KEMP), designed to solve conflicts between employees before they escalate.

“Conflict resolution promotes a healthier work environment,” said Roberts. “I am very proud of the team of 18 mediators who promote good human relations between employees every day.”

KEMP was established in June 2001 as an alternative conflict resolution program. Prior to KEMP, state employees had to file a grievance with their supervisors or an appeal to the Personnel Board on any employment issue. There were few favorable decisions at the grievance level which led to a dramatic increase in appeals to the Personnel Board. As a result, cases became backlogged and decisions could take as long as six months from the date of appeal.

The mediation program saves the Commonwealth time and money in resolving conflicts before they reach the level of a Personnel Board complaint. Through KEMP, the mediation process is usually completed in four hours or less, with a mutually satisfactory agreement reached 80% of the time. The Personnel Board, which often refers appeals to mediation, credits KEMP with a 63% increase in settlements. The average cost savings is \$6,500 for every case settled. With 37 mediations conducted last year, KEMP was able to save the Commonwealth \$238,500.

Kentucky will be formally recognized and presented with a plaque during NASPE's annual meeting August 12 – 16 in San Antonio, Texas.

Also recently honored was Personnel's Department for Employee Insurance (DEI), named winner of the Kentucky Digital Government Summit Award for developing a new online web application for the health insurance enrollment plan. The award, entitled Best Application Serving a Public Organization's Business, was announced at the Kentucky Digital Government Summit, held in Lexington.

"We received positive feedback from customers that the process of enrolling online was so quick and easy," Roberts said. "Plus, online health insurance enrollment saved the Commonwealth more than \$133,900.00 this past fall by creating less paperwork and more efficiency in government." The savings will grow each year as new participants are added.

Manual enrollment required a large staff to handle rate and plan changes, distribution of enrollment handbooks, paper applications, phone calls and opening and scanning paper applications into the system. Forty to sixty temporary employees were hired each year during open enrollment to manually process each application. As a result of the online applications, open enrollment was completed four weeks earlier this year with a considerable cost savings in salary as well.

This was the sixth year that the Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT) partnered with Government Technology magazine and industry sponsors to host the Kentucky Digital Government Summit.

"Personnel Cabinet employees in DEI as well as KEMP worked diligently to make both these programs a huge success," Roberts said. "The awards are a pat on the back for jobs well done."